

within 30 days of such notification, the claim shall be considered denied by reason of abandonment, except that a new claim may be filed at any time and new evidence submitted where the requirements of § 725.310 are not met.

ADJUDICATION BY THE DEPUTY
COMMISSIONER

§ 725.410 Initial findings by the deputy commissioner.

(a) Based upon the evidence developed, the deputy commissioner may make an initial finding with respect to the claim.

(b) If the evidence supports an initial finding of eligibility, and it has been determined that a coal mine operator may be liable for the claim, the deputy commissioner shall proceed in accordance with § 725.412. If no operator can be identified, the deputy commissioner shall proceed in accordance with § 725.411.

(c) If the evidence submitted does not support an initial finding of eligibility, the deputy commissioner shall so notify the claimant in writing. This notification shall specify the reasons why the claim cannot be approved, the additional evidence necessary to establish entitlement, the right of the claimant to submit additional evidence, and the right to request a hearing. Within 60 days from the mailing of such notice, unless such period is extended by the deputy commissioner for good cause shown, the claimant may submit new evidence or request a hearing. If the claimant:

(1) Takes no action within the specified 60 day period, the claim shall be considered denied by reason of abandonment (see § 725.409).

(2) Submits new evidence within the specified 60 day period, the deputy commissioner shall reconsider the initial finding, taking into account the additional evidence submitted. If the new evidence supports a finding of entitlement the deputy commissioner shall proceed in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section. If the new evidence does not support a finding of entitlement, the deputy commissioner shall notify the claimant in writing of this fact and the reasons therefor, and that he or she may request a hearing within

60 days after receipt of such notice unless the period is extended by the deputy commissioner for good cause shown. If no hearing is requested, the claim shall be deemed denied by reason of abandonment (see § 725.409).

(d) Unless an earlier operator identification has been made, if a hearing is requested under paragraph (c) of this section, the deputy commissioner shall identify the coal mine operator, if any, which may be liable for the payment of benefits to the claimant and proceed in accordance with § 725.412. If no such operator can be identified, the deputy commissioner may schedule a conference (see § 725.416) or refer the claim to the Office of Administrative Law Judges for appropriate proceedings.

§ 725.411 Adjudication upon initial findings of eligibility and no operator responsibility.

Where the deputy commissioner has found that the claimant is eligible and that there is no operator responsible for the payment of benefits, the deputy commissioner shall issue a proposed decision and order including findings of fact and conclusions of law as required by § 725.418 and authorize the payment of benefits. The claimant shall have 30 days after the date of issuance of the proposed decision and order within which to reject any or all of its terms. If the claimant does not reject the proposed decision and order, either in whole or in part, within this 30-day period, it will become final and effective. If for any reason the claimant rejects a proposed decision and order, the deputy commissioner may take such action as is appropriate including adjustment of the benefits to the level authorized by the uncontested portion of the proposed decision and order, if appropriate.

§ 725.412 Identification and notification of responsible operator.

(a) At any time during the processing of a claim under this part, after sufficient evidence has been made available to the deputy commissioner, the deputy commissioner may identify a coal miner operator (see § 725.491) which may be liable for the payment of the claim in accordance with the criteria contained in subpart F of this part.